

Waltham Forest is a great place for some, but we want it to be the best place for all. Mission Waltham Forest is the golden thread in becoming the best place for all. It sets out our ambition for how we can deliver the best services for our residents and create a more equitable borough. I don't need to tell you this because you experienced this in your work with residents every day, but we're launching this because there are real fundamental challenges that underpin why we need this now.

Firstly, the continuing funding cuts and the current economic outlook. We're in a recession, and we feel that, as a local authority, our residents are feeling it. The demand for our services is increasing. Over 80 families a week are presenting for housing needs. In the stark growing inequalities, one in four children in this borough live in poverty.

I had the privilege of meeting some of our young people recently. They can see that the inequality in Waltham Forest, for some, is actually getting worse. We need to improve the lives of others. We want to pursue excellence, but we need to bring everybody along with us. Despite the challenges, I feel very hopeful that we have amazing staff in you and we have the right foundations to deliver transformational outcomes for our residents. This is only the beginning. We want to work with you to shape how we put residents first in everything we do. We fix the system to give our residents equal opportunities from day one. Your role is vital to help make the ambition real and hold us to account as our journey begins.